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ABSTRACT

This paper integrates learning about international culture through the avenue of dance, and focuses on learning about specific regions of France, and about French Canadians, and Louisiana Cajuns through dance selections. The international flavor is not limited to dances from France, but includes French-Canadian and Cajun dancing as well. Opportunities are presented for teachers and students to examine French and French Canadian history, customs, traditions, and language development and to bring the curriculum to life through dance. Musical scores and dance instructions with diagrams are presented for the following dances: La Gallette, Le Branle du Quercy, Le Branle Morvandiau, La Bastringue, Cajun Waltz, and Cajun Two-Step. Also included are a map of France; a discussion of Les Branles, an early form of folk dancing; a brief history of the French settlement of Canada and the importance of music to the early settlers; and a discussion of the Louisiana Cajuns, French settlers who originally settled in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island and later migrated to Louisiana, and whose songs and dances celebrate love and family life. (Contains a resource list of books, records, and audio equipment.) (LL)

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ED356228

Name of Session: **Let the Good Times Roll**
Laissez Les Bons Temps Rouler

Description of Presentation:

The participants in this session will be given the opportunity to blend learning and/or integrate learning about cultures from around the world through the avenue of dance and to examine French and French-Canadian influences in North America along with the promotion of higher order thinking skills development through the analysis and synthesis of these relations.

Brief Biographical Sketch:

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John is currently teaching at UNC-Wilmington in the HPER Department where most of his efforts are focused around methods of teaching.

He has served in a wide variety of teaching and administrative roles in health and physical education that include experience at many levels: pre-school, elementary through high school, university, older adult, and in the State Department of Public Instruction as the head of North Carolina's health and physical education programs. His combined experiences of teaching and administration at all of these levels have allowed John the opportunity to apply health and physical education strategies in fitness, alcohol and drug prevention, smoking and other health risk prevention categories affecting people of all ages. John's professional training and experiences in health education, physical education, administration, curriculum and instruction, and as a certified public manager have provided him a solid base on which to develop practical perspectives and strategies on health and physical education program improvement and on the designing and evaluating of effective programs for all conditions of human kind. He has taught dance to all ages pre-school through older adults.

A-V Request:

- Overhead projector and large screen
- Cassette player and microphone with plenty of volume

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Bringing the Curriculum to Life Through Dance

The primary focus of this session, "Let the Good Times Roll! Laissez Les Bons Temps Rouler!" and this article is on blending learning with doing and/or integrating learning about the cultures around the world through the avenue of dance. The opportunity to bring the curriculum to life through the physical experience of dance is what makes this such a fun and exciting way to approach education for people of all ages.

In addition, the session focuses on learning about specific regions of France represented through the dance selections. The chance to look at history and culture is played up very naturally as the dances are explored. Customs, traditions, and language development are examined at a greater depth as it is appropriate during the session.

It is important to note that this session takes on an international favor as it is not limited to dances from France, but includes French-Canadian and Cajun dancing. This allows the same things to happen regarding history, customs, language, etc. that were taught during the French dances.

It, also, allows an opportunity to look at French and French-Canadian influences all over North America along with the promotion of higher order thinking skill development through the analysis and synthesis of these relations.

Perhaps the strongest appeal for this session and article is the attraction of teachers of all levels and skills, who can fully participate whatever their entry level may be and thoroughly enjoy all efforts at bringing the curriculum to life through dance.

The remainder of this article comes directly from the session as it was delivered. Hopefully, it will provide as much enjoyment to its readers as it did to its two authors.

Let the Good Times Roll!
Laissez Les Bons Temps Rouler!

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1. Bretagne - La Galette
2. Guyenne - Branle du Quercy]
3. Gascogne - Branle du Quercy]
4. Nivernais - Branle Morvandiau
5. Gascogne - Branle Gascon
6. Auvergne - Berlet d' Auvergne
7. Limousin - Lou Panliran
8. Provence - Li Courdello
   La Farandole

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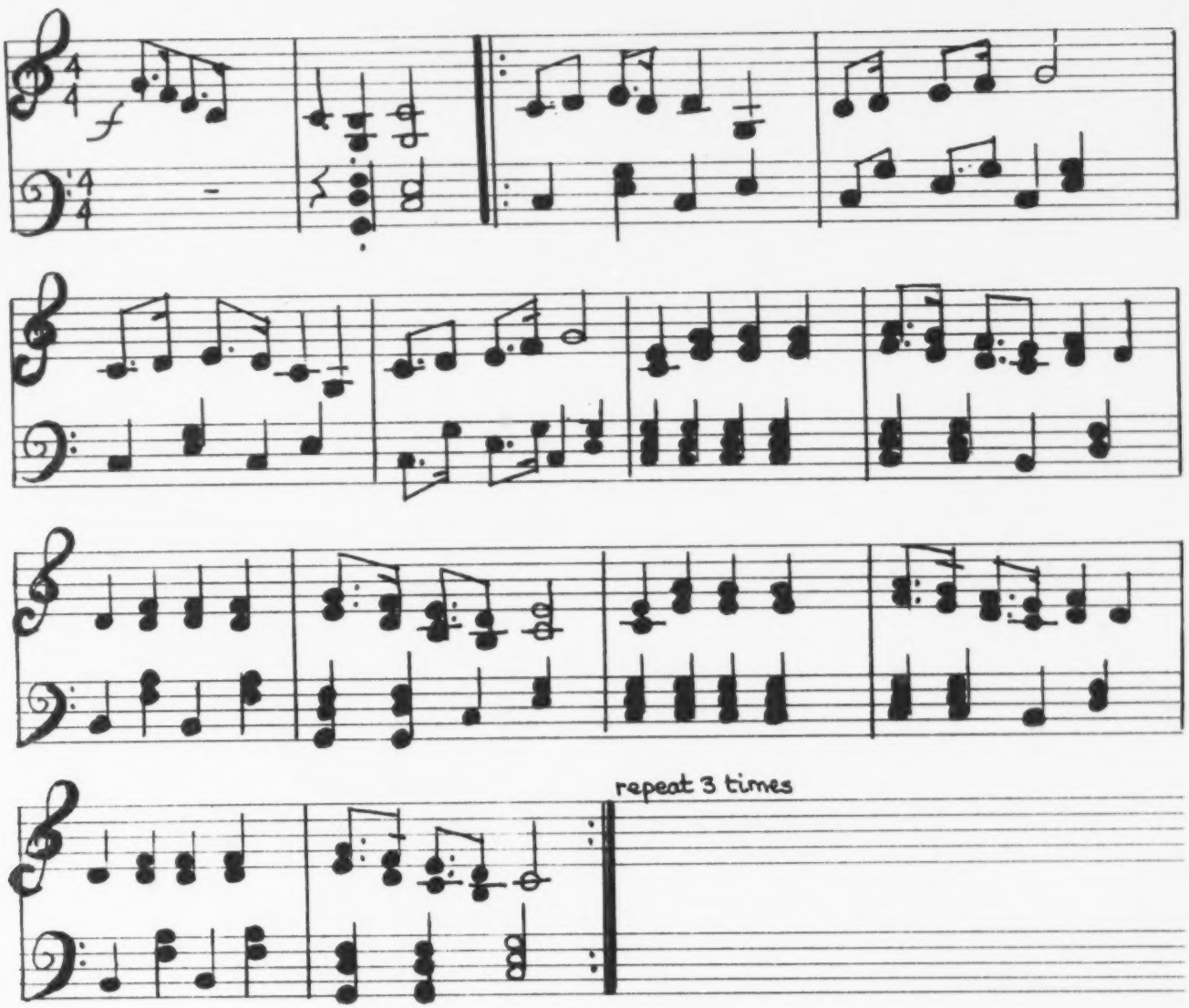
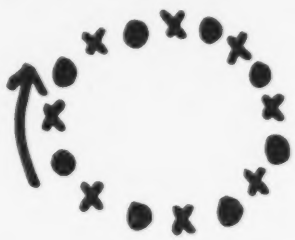
La Galette

La Galette

ORIGIN-The Galette is a flat cake traditionally eaten on the Epiphanie, January 6, to celebrate the arrival of the three kings. Inside of this cake, a token is hidden. Whoever finds it is crowned king or queen for the day. As soon as the new leaders begin to celebrate with a glass of champagne, the remaining people stand and shout, "le roi boit, la reine boit!!!"

This dance is to celebrate January 6.

PRESENTATION-Even number of dancers in the man-woman-man-woman formation. Form a circle, facing inside and holding hands. Move clock-wise.



FIRST STEP-The basic step is called Circasia and is executed in the following manner two times.

Cross right foot in front of left foot
Bring left foot back in next to right foot

Cross right foot in back of left foot
Bring left foot back in next to right foot

Swing right foot toward the left
Swing left foot toward the right

SECOND STEP-Second step is executed during the refrain only. Clap hands. Face partner. Hook right arms and turn clock-wise with small jumping steps eight counts. Clap hands. Hook left arms and turn counter clock-wise eight counts. Repeat.

SONG - LA GALETTE

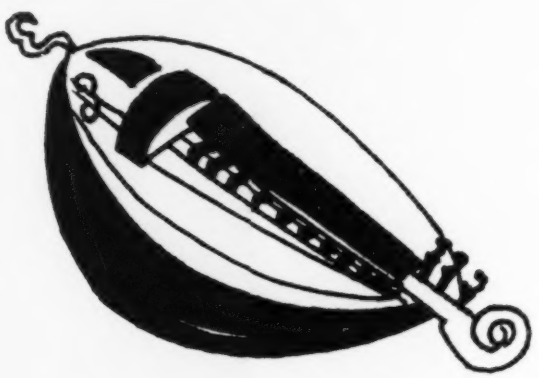
J'aime la galette
Savez-vous comment?
Quand elle est bien faite,
Avec du beurre dedans.

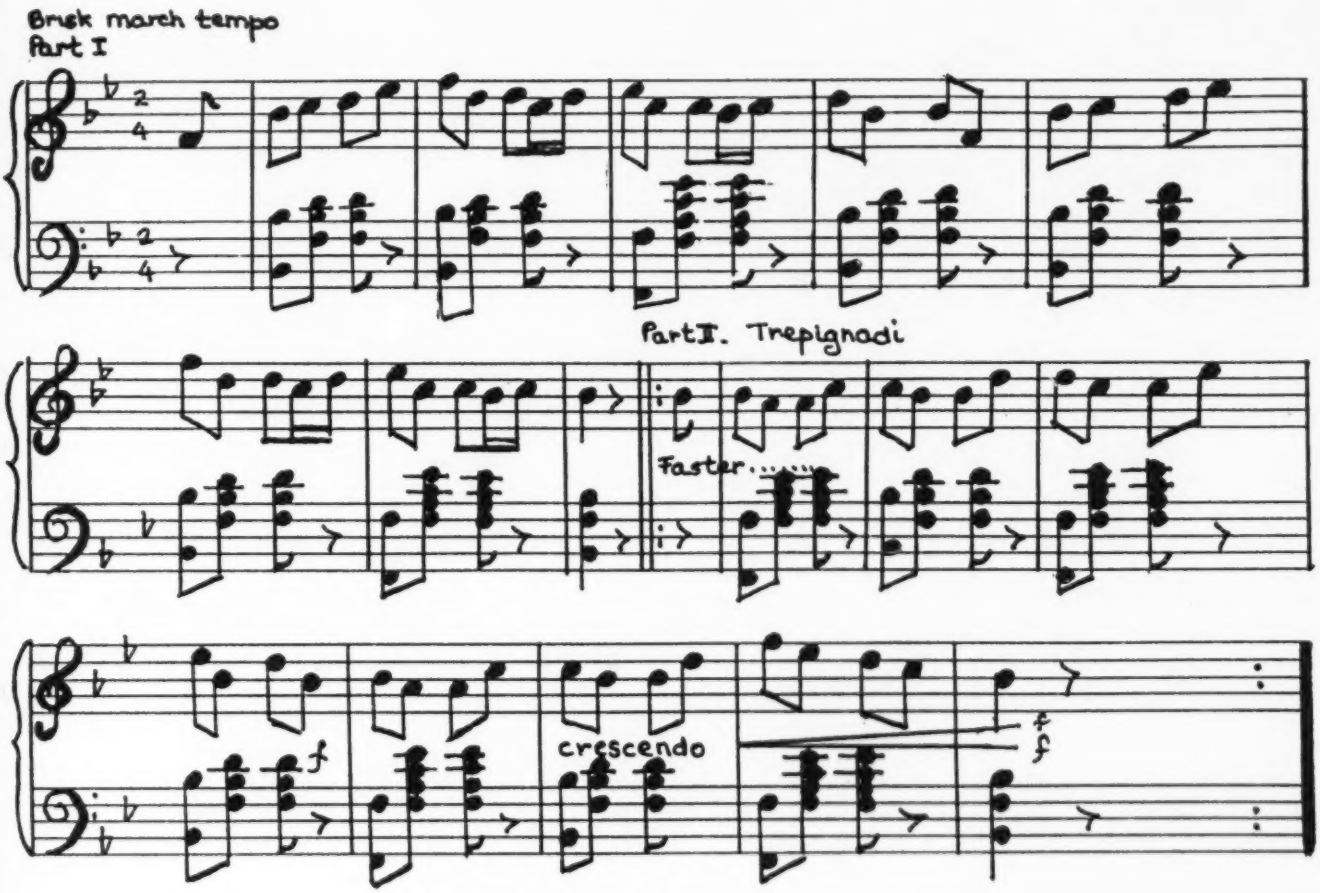
Refrain
Tra la la la, la la la, la lere lere
Tra la la la, la la la, la la la (bis)

Les Branles

As one of the earliest forms of folk dancing, "Branles" became popular throughout France. In the course of the centuries, the name "Branle" was applied to a diversity of steps and figures, as each region made its own interpretation for the dance and evolved variations on the original branle step. This will become apparent on comparing the Branle du Quercy with other Branles such as the Branle du Morvandiau and the Branle Gascon. Most branles share some common characteristics: dances are in a circle, movements include some back and forth steps, dances conclude with a faster step as in the "Trepignadi" or the "Galop."

The gay, lively music of the Branles is played either by a "violoneux" fiddler - or a "vielleux." The "vielle" is a musical instrument shaped like an elongated violin, with a short finger - board and strings set in vibration by a resined wheel turned by a handle - a medieval ancestor of the hurdy gurdy.



Branle du Quercy

- Part I is played 5 consecutive times before passing to Part II.
- The 1st and 2nd playing of Part I are for "La Promenade."
- The 3rd and 4th playing of Part I are for "Le Pas de Branle."
- The 5th playing of Part I is for "Sliding Step."
- Part II is played with the repeat indicated, for "Le Galop."

Le Branle du Quercy

Quercy is a region located in the southwestern part of France. The area is commonly known as "Aquitaine."

This dance does not require any specific number of couples.

La procession: At the beginning of the dance there are 16 counts to let the dancers on the floor.

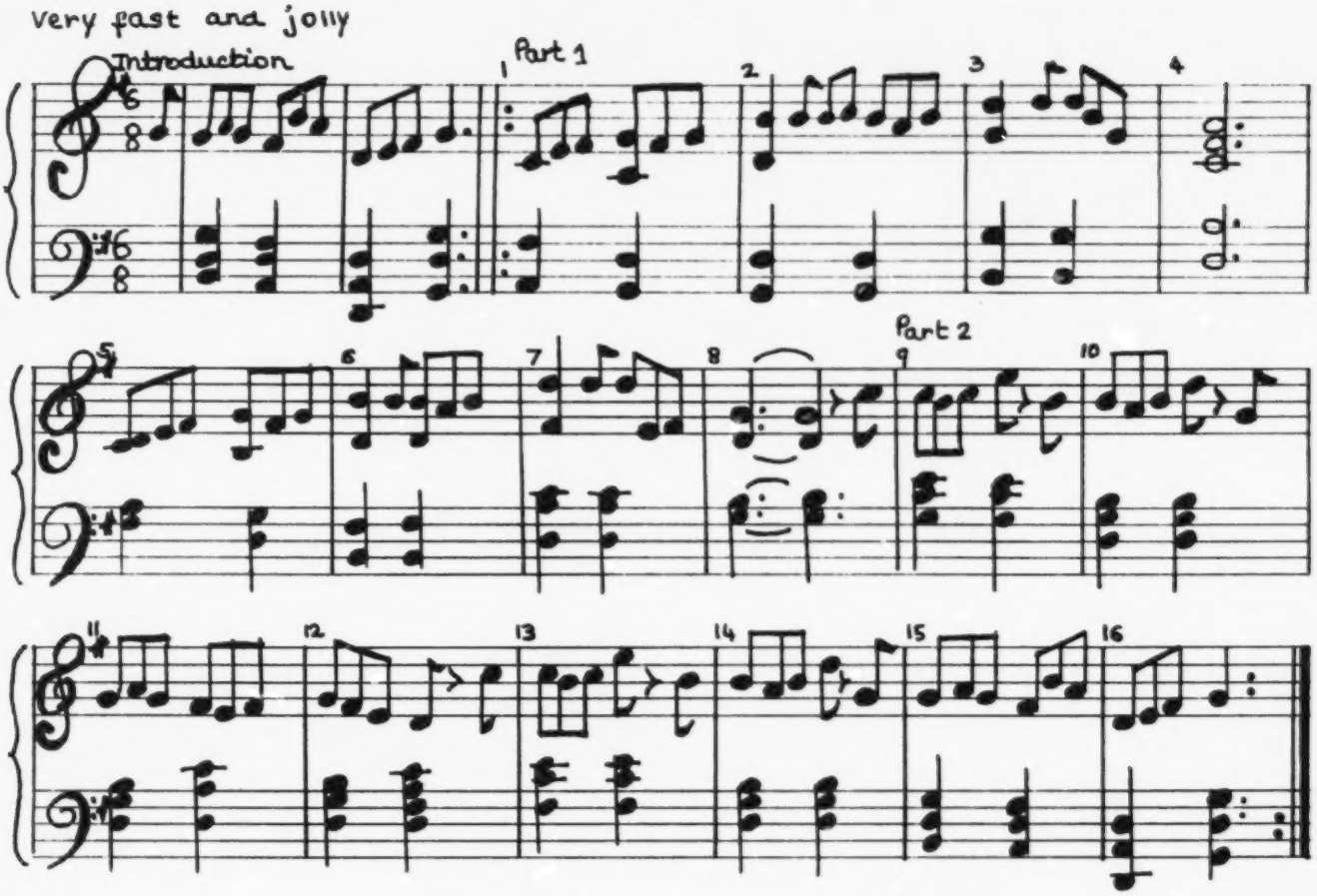
La promenade: La promenade occupies 16 counts. Each man offers his right arm to his partner and the couples stand in a line. Starting with the left foot, couples march 16 steps moving clock-wise in order to form a circle. They, then, turn around and march 16 steps counter clock-wise.

Le pas de Branle: Le pas de Branle occupies 32 counts. During the first 4 measures, the dancers move toward the center of the circle gradually raising their hands forward and up. During the next 4 measures, the dancers move backward to the original position, gradually lowering their hands. The steps forward should not be too long as to avoid crowding of the dancers when moving towards the center of the circle. Repeat pas de Branle 3 more times.

Sliding Step: Man puts his partner in front of him to his right. Her right hand rests on her waist with his right hand on hers. Both hold left hands extended to the left. Clock-wise, they take 16 sliding steps.

Le Galop: Dancers drop hands and face each other. They link right elbows and raise their left arm above their head. Dancers take 15 running steps in a circle. On the 16th count they change arms and rotate in the other direction.

At the end of the Galop, couples resume their position at the beginning of the dance (in a circle) and repeat the entire dance as many times as they wish. They end the dance by marching out in the same way as they came in.

Le Branle Morvandiau

Le Branle Morvandlau

(A very easy dance, equally suitable for children and adults)

The name is derived from "le Morvan," a range of hills cutting across Nivernais. Any number of couples can take part in the dance, each couple dancing independently of the others. Usually the couples dance in a row but it is permissible to dispose the couples in whatever pattern is best adapted to the place where the dance is performed.

On a stage, couples may be placed on two rows, sidewise to the public and staggered. On the floor of a gymnasium, a circle formation is more effective.

The following directions are given for one couple. All couples execute the same evolutions.

A

Figure 1 - Part 1 of Music - Measures 1 & 2 - The couple holds hands, face to face - see "A". Starting with the left foot, the girl moving backward, the man moving forward - they take three walking steps, then bring the right foot beside the left foot, lightly stamping the right foot while doing so.

Measures 3 & 4 - Starting with the right foot - the man moving backward, the girl moving forward, they take three walking steps, then bring the left foot beside the right foot, stamping the left foot while doing so.

Measures 5 & 6, 7 & 8 - Same as measures 1 & 2, 3 & 4.

Figure 2 - Part 2 of Music - Measures 9 & 10 - The couple, still holding hands, each dancer executes a complete turn on himself, in four steps, each step successively bring the dancers side by side, back to back, side by side and once more face to face. It is executed as follows:

1st step - Starting with the foot nearer to the direction in which they turn, the man turns to his left, the woman to her right. This brings them side by side under the arch formed by the man's left arm and the girl's right arm raised high - see "B." 2nd step turns them back to back - see "C" - while the raised arms are lowered and the other arms are gradually lifted so that, with the 3rd turning step, they are side by side - see "D" - under the arch formed by the man's right arm and the girl's left arm. 4th step turns them once more face to face as their arms are lowered.

B C D

During measures 11 & 12, 13 & 14, 15 & 16, three more turns are completed, making four turns in all. The fourth turn completed and without any pause, the whole dance is repeated. There can be as many repetitions as desired.

With a little practice Figure 2 can be executed gracefully and with speed, arms moving smoothly up and down. The dancers should hold hands loosely since their fingers must revolve around each others to permit the dancers to turn.

During the turns, each couple must be careful to stay in its proper position relatively to the others, in order to preserve the pattern presented by the whole group at the start of the dance.

Canada and the French Settlement

In 1534, Jacques Cartier sailed west from France in search of a "fabled" route to the wealth of India and China. He landed at Gaspe and soon realized that he had not reached the East. Nevertheless, he hoped the new lands might also be a source of silver, gold, and spices.

Although the French never found precious metals, they did discover another source of wealth--furs. Furs were used for beaver hats for wealthy Europeans. Since many people were attracted by the chance to gain a high profit, fur trading became the basis of the earliest settlements in Canada.

Samuel de Champlain founded a permanent French colony in 1608 at Quebec by erecting a small two-story building surrounded by a moat and defended by cannons. A popular theory states that the word Quebec is derived from the Algonquin word "Kebec" which means the "narrowing of the waters."

In 1625, Jesuit missionaries landed at Quebec. Traveling widely, they made contact with the Indians and won the confidence of the Hurons who became the chief suppliers of furs.

The French population grew very slowly and was surpassed by the English colonies to the south. Over the years the French and the English had become enemies, fighting for control of North America.

In 1759 the British attacked Quebec and defeated the French army. After the battle the French settlements came under the control of England, ending a period of over two hundred years of French claims to Canada.

The "Acte de Québec" (1774) guaranteed to uphold French customs, civil laws, as well as the freedom of the catholic church. At the same time this act established a government led by a British governor and a judicial system based on England's. This attempt to assimilate French institutions to English institutions never had much success. It became more and more difficult to follow a political course which would satisfy the demands of both cultural groups.

In 1791, Canada was divided into two parts: High Canada (today Ontario) and Low Canada (Quebec). The majority of the inhabitants in High Canada were English whereas those of Low Canada were French. So was born the geographic division between the English and the French--a dichotomy which still exists today.

Music

Music was important in the lives of early settlers. Songs not only provided entertainment, but accompanied many of the activities of pioneer life-singing made the hard work easier. There were songs for barn raising, milking, cutting wood, spinning wool, etc. Many songs can be traced back to the French and British settlers and are still heard today.

There are also a number of home-grown Canadian songs which tell of life in the early settlements. Many are sung to tunes borrowed from already existing folk songs: "Vive la Canadienne" uses the melody of an older song "Par Derriere Chez Mon Pere."

Canadian folk music was largely a vocal, or singing tradition. Most songs were traditionally performed without instrumental accompaniment. Musical instruments were used primarily to accompany dances. Since dancing was a favorite part-time of the early settlers, step and clog dances, reels, jigs, strathspeys, hornpipes, square dances and waltzes were popular. Some of the dances had names like "Strip the Willow" and "Old Barnyard Eight." The fiddle (or violin) was the king of the instruments in both French and English Canada.

Dancers would step to the music of a lone fiddle throughout many a night, but sometimes a button accordion, guitar, or jew's harp (guimbarde in French Canada) might join in. When no instruments were available, people literally produced their own dance music by singing songs that imitated the sound of the instruments. This type of music was called, among other terms, chin music, mouth music, or diddling.

La Bastringue

(Cindy Lopez, French Folk Dances)

La Bastringue is a quadrille. The quadrille itself can be traced back to England's contredanse which could be danced either in a circle or with partners facing one another.

Little by little the contredanse became more complicated and took the name of cotillon. The cotillon reached the United States in the mid-18th century and is believed to be the forerunner of our square dance.

The quadrille has descended from the cotillon and was probably brought to the new world by French troops quartered in Acadia.

La Bastringue

(French Canadian Mixer)

Music: Worldtone 10034 (Available from: Worldtone Music, Inc. 230 7th Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011)

Formation: Single circle with lady on man's left

- Forward and back 2 times (16 counts)
- Circle left (4-2 steps, 8 counts)
- Circle right (4-2 steps, 8 counts)
- Gents turn left hand lady (corners) under and turn to right to face new partner and swing (16 counts)
- Promenade (8-2 steps, 16 counts)
- Repeat dance

Louisiana and the Cajuns

Around 1600 French settlers coming from Normandy settled in eastern Canada. Their territory covered the following present provinces: Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Samuel de Champlain who arrived there at the beginning of the century gave it the name of Acadie (Acadia in English.) Acadians used to be fishermen, farmers, and fur traders.

In 1713 Acadia was renamed Nova Scotia and was turned over to England after the treaty of Utrecht (7 years before the fall of Quebec.) Quickly, the Acadians were chased away and all their property was confiscated. Pushed into boats, many families were separated never to be reunited again as is illustrated in Longfellow's poem "Evangeline."

This great migration lasted for several years. Many Acadians died during their journey to French Louisiana. Of the 18,000 Acadians, only 4,000 arrived at their final destination. They settled in this flat land where the slow waters of the bayous flow. They had found good land and peace and they never forgot their French culture and language.

Pronounced by Americans, the term Acadien, or Cadien, became Cajun. Cajun songs celebrate love and family life. Their music was played for family celebrations and Saturday night dances, those dances were called les "Fais dodo" (Go to sleep) because children slept while their parents danced the night away.

The traditional musical instruments used are the accordion, the violin or fiddle, the triangle, known as the 'tit fer or basstringue, the spoons, the Spanish guitar, and sometimes a harmonica.
(Peggy L. Smith)

So, as they say in Cajun "Laissez les bons temps rouler!" (Let the good times roll!)

Cajun Waltz

Music: "Les Bon Temps Rouler Waltz" by Michael Doucet and Beausoleil (Available from: Arhoolie Catalog, 10341 Sam Pable Avenue, Ed Cerrito, CA 94530)

The Cajun Waltz is like other waltzes done to 3/4 time. At Cajun dances about half of the tunes played will be waltzes and the other half will be two-steps.

Waltzing Cajun style is traditionally done cheek to cheek and is a very smooth dance with little up and down motion at all. Of course, there is the distinctive 1-2-3 pattern of dancing with all the turns and variations found in other waltz forms.

The gents start out on their left foot and the ladies their right. The lead foot alternates every 3 beats. The basic pattern is simply a walking step in which the first beat of every measure gets a little more emphasis through a longer step or a little more weight placed on the floor for count #1 of the measure.

Cajun Two-Step and One-Step

Music: "Ya Que' Chose" by Zachary Richard (Available from: Zach Rich, Inc., P.O. Box 305, Scott, LA 70583 and "Bon Temps" by Michael Doucet and Beausoleil (Available from: Arhoolie Catalog, 10341 Sam Pablo Avenue, Ed Cerrito, CA 94530)

Depending on the tempo, if it is extremely fast, a one-step will be selected over the basic two-step. Both are in closed position like the waltz, but done to 4/4 time. The basic two-step is a step-together-step movement (step left, close right beside left, step left and then right, left, right - opposite footwork for the lady). It is counted 1 and 2, 3 and 4 or L,R,L and R,L,R.

The one step is helpful when the tempo of a piece is very fast or the dancers want to slow their pace a bit. With the one-step, one walking step is taken for each beat of the music instead of three for each two beats with the two-step pattern. All the figures are the same in both patterns.

Resources
Books, Records, and Audio Equipment

Arhoolie Catalog 10341 Sam Pueblo Avenue, Ed Cerrito, California 94530

Association Quebecoise des Loisirs Folkloriques 4545 Avenue Pierre de Coubertin, C.P. 1000, Succ. "M", Montreal, Quebec, Canada HIV 3R2

Can.Ed.Media Ltd., 185 Spadina Avenue, Suite 1, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5T 2C6

Centre Franco - Ontarien de Resources Pedagogiques (Swing la Baquèse: La Galette) 339, rue Wilbrod Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, KIN6M4

Country Dance and Song Society, 17 New South Street, Northampton, Massachussetts 01060

Dance Record Dist./Folkcraft Records, 10 Fenwick Street, Newark, New Jersey 07114

La Danse Traditionnelle au Quebec. Sillery, Presse de l'Unviversite du Quebec, 1986.

Folk Dance Videos International, P.O. Box 470907, Charlotte, North Carolina 28247

Gessler Publishing Co., Inc., 55 West 13 Street, New York, NY 10011

The Lloyd Shaw Foundation, P.O. Box 134, Sharpes, Florida 32959

Worldtone Music, Inc., 230 7th Avenue, New York, NY 10011

Zach Rich, Inc., P.O. Box 305, Scott, Louisiana 70583